



Benelux Meteor

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Quick Read

In General

Protest scheduled

A world-wide day of protest in multiple major cities is scheduled March 20 to coincide with the anniversary of the beginning of the Iraq War. Approximately 10,000-15,000 people are expected in the Brussels demonstration to begin at 2 p.m. at Gare Nord (North train station.) Info: Kim Perino, 80th ASG AT/FP Program Manager, DSN 361-5580 or commercial 068 27-5580.

Bank jobs available

Andrews Federal Credit Union has job openings. A full time member service representative is needed in Schinnen and requires at least two years of previous financial institution experience in loans and operations. Branch managers are needed in both Schinnen and Chièvres locations, and require a bachelor's degree in business, finance or a related field and three-five years experience in a retail branch atmosphere. Info: Chièvres branch, DSN 361-5809 or civilian 068 65-6680; or Schinnen branch, DSN 360-7508 or civilian 0464 43-7507.

Belgium

Traffic disrupted

The City of Jurbise starts sewer line construction March 15 on the Chemin des Princes. Traffic will be prohibited on Chemin des Princes from Route d'Ath to the crossroads with Rue des Déportés. The project will take about one year to complete. Info: SHAPE Federal Police, 065 449202.

Exhibition begins soon

NSA Youth Services photography exhibition is March 7-19 at NSA Library. Reception is March 7, 4 p.m., in the library.

Netherlands and Germany

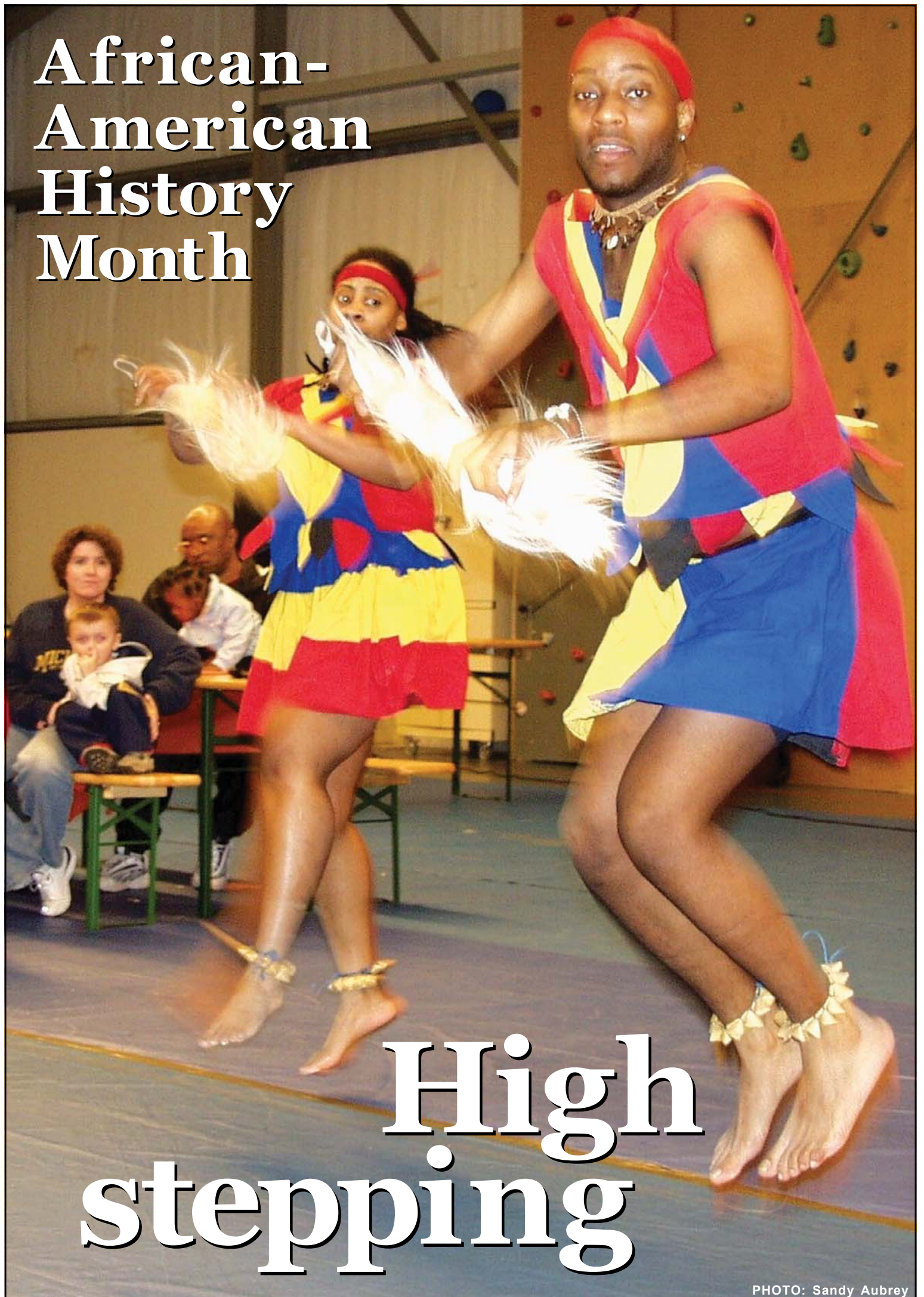
Nominations due

Nominations for Volunteer of the Year in the 254th BSB are due by March 31. Categories are family member, youth, sponsor, civilian (to include local nationals), military and family. Info: Teri Ryan, 046 443-7451.

Don't forget AFAP issues

The Army Family Action Plan Conference is March 11-12. Community members who wish to have issues addressed should submit them to the ACS, Building 39, at Schinnen. There are also "Issue Boxes" distributed throughout the base.

African-American History Month



High stepping

PHOTO: Sandy Aubrey

Cultural group wows Schinnen audience

Cheryl Pongo and Marvin Hawkins of the Bi-Okoto Drum and Dance Theater perform the Agbeko dance from Ghana Feb. 9 in Schinnen sports center. The cultural group taught the audience a song that in turn accompanied the performers. The group also invited spectators to learn some dance steps, which was a big hit with children. After the performance,

members of the Tri-Border Cultural Awareness Committee treated the audience to fried chicken, green beans, corn, red beans and rice, corn bread and desserts. The drum and dance troupe is sponsored by U.S. Armed Forces Entertainment and is on tour of U.S. military installations in the United Kingdom, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

Memorial erected for slain WWII Soldiers

By Rick Haverinen

A commemorative program in Chièvres focused on 11 martyred Soldiers among all African Americans fighting during World War II.



Rikken

The Feb. 26 program to mark African-American History Month, which is observed every February, featured a presentation by Adda Rikken, about the black American

Soldiers who were captured and later murdered by a Nazi SS squad in Wereth, Belgium Dec. 17, 1944, the second day of the Battle of the Bulge.

The Soldiers were from Service Battery, 333rd Field Artillery Bn., that had been in continuous combat since they landed at Utah Beach June 19, 1944.

"At the time of the Battle of the Bulge, the unit was located in the vicinity of St. Vith, Belgium, not so far from Wereth ... in support of the Army VII Corps and especially the 106th Infantry Div.," Rikken told the audience on Daumerie Caserne.

The Germans began shelling American troops, including the 333rd, in Schoenberg, Belgium, on Dec. 16 as the Battle of the Bulge started.

"The 333rd F.A. Bn. was ordered to displace further west but to have Battery C and Service Battery (remain) in position to support the 14th Cavalry and 106th Inf. Div.," Rikken said. "By the morning of Dec. 17, these two positions were

completely overrun by the advancing German troops and armor. While many personnel tried to escape through Schoenberg, 11 men from Service Battery went overland in a northwest direction in hope of reaching American lines. At about 3 p.m. they approached the first house in the hamlet of Wereth, owned by Mathias Langer."

Rikken said that according to recollections of Hermann Langer, who was 7 years old at the time, one of the black American GIs held a white flag as they approached the Langer house. Only one or two of the Americans had

rifles, and "they were wet, hungry, desperate, and visibly worn out."

The Langers gave the American GIs something to eat, and Mathias Langer tried to explain how they could find a path to take them toward St. Vith and the rest of their unit. Because the Langers spoke German and no English, it was impossible for the family to communicate verbally with the Soldiers.

The Americans were still eating when a car of Nazi SS stopped their car in front of the Langer house.

"The black Americans quickly left the house with their hands up and were commanded to stand in the front of the house," Rikken told the audience. "Later they had to sit down on the wet soil of the slope along the path at the back of the house. They shivered, and Mathias Langer suggested the shelter of a (barn.) Strict was the refusal of the SS. 'They will feel warm when they run in front of our car,' they said. Before dark, the prisoners got the order to run in front of the car. The SS murdered them a few hundred meters from the house, in the corner of a pasture that belonged to Mathias Langer."

Hostilities moved into the area, and four of the Langer children were wounded by a bomb that fell outside their house. The bodies of the black American Soldiers were covered with snowfall during the unusually severe winter and lay in the field until the spring thaw.

"Unlike the Malmedy Massacre, nobody remembered this spot," Rikken said. "Even in the village, nobody spoke of it."

Rikken referred to a similar event on the identical date in which Nazi SS Soldiers killed at least 84 captured U.S. Army Soldiers at Baugez Crossroads. Another 43 managed to



Volunteer combat soldiers prepare for a day's training February 28, 1945 in preparation for shipment to veteran units at front lines in Germany.



Cpl. Carlton Chapman was a machine gunner in an M-4 tank, attached to a Motor Transport unit near Nancy, France, November 5, 1944.



The family of Mathias Langer after World War II.

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escape the slaying. Unlike the incident at Wereth, the Malmedy murders eventually resulted in a war crimes trial in which 73 SS Soldiers were charged for that crime and other atrocities in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge.

Rikken said that someone had to have tipped the SS that American Soldiers were at the Langer house. However, other American Soldiers had passed through the area that day.

Rikken explained that people in that part of Belgium were very sympathetic to the German cause because they were of the same ethnicity and spoke the same language. Prior to World War I, the same area had been on German soil. The Treaty of Versailles redrew the national frontier. Rikken displayed a book to her audience with a photo taken in St. Vith in 1940 in which a Hitler Youth rally included a banner thanking the Germans for liberating them. Rikken said that any American using a contemporary map would not have realized the serious political dangers of the area.

“When the Americans entered St. Vith in Sept. 1944, they saw no flags, no people on the streets,” Rikken said. “Their men served in German uniforms.”

Pvt. Curtis Adams, Pvt. 1st Class George Davis, Staff Sgt. Thomas Forte, Pvt. Nathaniel Moss, Pvt. 1st Class George Moten, Tech. 4th Class James Stewart are buried in Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium. The bodies of Cpl. Mager Bradley, Pvt. Robert Green, Pvt. 1st Class James Leatherwood,

“And now we have a proper and decent memorial to honor these 11 GIs and also all black GIs of World War II, the invisible Soldiers, who too long in Europe never got the recognition they were due. We did the monument for our American liberators because we will never forget.”

and Pvt. William Pritchett were repatriated for Stateside burials.

The many ceremonies in 1994 commemorating wartime events of 50 years earlier inspired Hermann Langer that a memorial was needed at the spot the men were murdered. A used grave stone was outfitted with a plaque with the names of the 11 victims and erected in the place their bodies were found. This memorial

was small and difficult to find, so funds were raised and the memorial area was expanded last August. More work will be done to improve the memorial over the next two years, including the installation of brass plaques and purchasing more land. A doctor in Mobile, Ala. collected money to honor Pvt. William Pritchett, a local man, and the other 10 murdered Soldiers. Other donations came from active duty and veteran groups and Belgian nationals.

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the invisible Soldiers, who too long in Europe never got the recognition they were due,”

Rikken said. “We did the monument for our American liberators because we will never

forget.”

Rikken and her husband Willy both lived in Europe during WWII. In addition to their continuing work on the monument for the 11 Soldiers slain in Wereth, they also help returning American World War II veterans find places in which they previously served.



Task force like a Band of Brothers-in-law



Spec. Joshua Laden, right, checks the undercarriage of a vehicle while his half-brother Spec. John Schulz observes.

By F. Neil Neely and Sandy Aubrey

If you thought that "Band of Brothers" was just a Hollywood film then perhaps you should take a closer look at Battery B, 1st Bn., 125th Field Artillery.

Sixteen of this unit's Soldiers are related by either blood or marriage, making them bands of brothers - uncles - cousins - fathers and sons, and that becomes quite a combination of kinship and camaraderie.

These Soldiers seem to have no trouble unraveling a tangle of relations. For instance, team member Sgt. Justin Boyle remarked about the holidays, "This year for Christmas I got a present from my mother's sister's daughter's husband's brother."

To keep track of the unit's structure, a genealogy report might be more helpful than an organizational chart.

Among the many close relations in Battery B is Spec. John Fritchman who is serving at Chièvres along with his stepson Sgt. Justin Boyle and a nephew by marriage, Pvt. 1st Class Jake Luedtke.



Sgt. Justin Boyle, left, Spec. John Fritchman, center, and Pvt. 1st Class Jake Luedtke unwind after their duty day.



Brothers Spec. Mike Weichert, left, Spec. Matt Weichert, center, and Sgt. Brian Weichert, from Fairmount, Minn. enjoy a beer at a café in Ath and a break from their force protection duties at NATO Support Activity in Brussels.

Boyle is team leader and Fritchman is assigned to his squad. So, what's it like to outrank your step-dad?

"If I need to pull rank, I will," Boyle said. "He's pretty squared away, so it doesn't come up that often. I respect him a lot. I refer to him the way that most of the guys refer to him, on a last name basis, Fritch."

That's because Fritchman met and married Boyle's mom pretty much after Boyle had grown up and moved out on his own.

"I've known him for a long time," Boyle said. "I really appreciate his relationship with my mother, but (ours is) more of a friendship relationship than father-son."

The two room together and get along well. Still, Fritchman doesn't much care for the idea that his stepson outranks him.

Originally, Fritchman was motivated to join the unit by his stepson going through basic training and, "That gave me the notion to get back in," he said.

Later, nephew Luedtke would join his uncle John and cousin Justin in the same unit.

Take out the genealogy chart because Luedtke has Soldier relatives on force protection duty in Brussels. The three Weichert Brothers at NATO Support Activity are related to him by marriage. Sgt. Brian, Spec., Mike, and Spec. Matt Weichert are all natives of Fairmount, Minn.

All three of the Weichters are on team four and Brian is the leader.

"I think the most important thing for me is to know when to be a brother and when to be a leader," Brian Weichert said. "When we're on duty, I'm their team leader, and they respect that. Off duty, I get to be their big brother and that is when the fun the starts."

Brian feels that their situation in the Army is unique.

"Many squads or teams spend years and years developing cohesion or unity like brothers," he said. "For us, that bond has been 20 years in the making and that's why we're so effective working together on the same team. It has been a great experience."

Belgium seems more like home for the Weichters because they all deployed together.

"It's nice because a lot of people leave their family back at home," said Mike. "I got to bring a part of mine with me, and we all get along."

The brothers said they don't have many disagreements.

"If we do," said Brian, "they only last about five minutes."

While other Soldiers in their task force had to be content with celebrating the holidays away from loved ones, the Weichters were able to celebrate Christmas together, albeit far from home.



Sgt. Trent Johnson

"On Christmas Day we hung out together and made our traditional dinner here at NSA," said brother Mike. "We had a great time."

"Our mom sent us a little tiny fake Christmas tree," Brian said. "It was about two feet tall. On Christmas Eve we all got together around the tree and opened the presents that she'd sent over."

Spec. Nate Johnson, a college sophomore majoring in law enforcement, is far from his home in Minnesota but he managed to bring along his father, Sgt. Trent Johnson.

Although Nate is stationed at Schinnen and the senior Johnson is stationed at Chièvres, the two communicate regularly.

The fact that father and son are assigned to the same unit is no accident. Johnson said his father's dream was to have a son serving in the military with him. Three years ago Nate joined his father's unit.

"I like it; it's nice having someone close to talk to. It makes it easier," Johnson said. "Unfortunately our schedules haven't allowed us to do much traveling together, but my mom, sister and grandfather came to visit for the holidays and that was great."

Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thate is a full-time Minnesota National Guardsman assigned to Battery B. A Fairmont native, Thate took his 19 year-old nephew Spec. William McAdams under his wing and introduced him to the National Guard.

McAdams lived with Thate for several months before deploying to Europe. He's assigned to Chièvres and Thate is the NCOIC of the unit at Schinnen.

"It's good to have family around. We've taken a few trips together and seen some sights," Thate said.

McAdams is really enjoying his European tour. "I like it here," he said. "I get to drink legally. I'd like to stay longer. I've been traveling a little bit too. I've been to Amsterdam with Spec. Luedtke."

Others in the task force with a special relationship are Spec. John Schulz and his half-brother Spec. Joshua Laden. Laden joined the unit first. "The reason I joined was pretty much because of my brother and college," said Schulz.

What motivates families to join the Army en masse? Perhaps it's patriotism or the lure of great educational benefits. Either way these Soldiers have spread the word about Army life and often influenced close relatives to follow in their boot steps.

Battery B is performing force protection duty as part of Task Force Steelguard headquartered in Chièvres. They are members of the Minnesota National Guard with armories located in Fairmont and Jackson, Minn. They replaced Task Force Borinquen from Puerto Rico last September.

Task Force Steelguard will redeploy back to the States over the next couple months.



McAdams



Thate

Carnaval is time to be merry



PHOTO: Sandy Aubrey

Revelers keep up with the oldest traditions of merriment at the 254th Base Support Bn. carnaval party Feb. 20 at the community center in Schinnen.

By Sandy Aubrey

One of the most important local events in the Dutch Provinces of Limburg and Noord-Brabant is without any doubt Carnaval. Three days long, people will disguise themselves, go out, eat, drink and be very merry. Carnaval is an intense celebration which ends on Ash Wednesday when Lent starts and everything is back to "normal" again for another year.

Although it is thought that Carnaval was originally a religious festival, this is not totally true. Before Christ was born, people would celebrate the start of a new year at the beginning of spring. For the longest time February was considered the last month of the year and the new year would start with celebrating the fact that the sun had cast away the dark winter.

The chronicles of Babylon, in 2600 B.C., tell us about the sacrificial death of the king every year during the New Year's celebrations. The king had to die for his people's sins in order for them to start the new year with a clean slate. But to prevent kingship becoming a one-year affair, it was decided to have a temporary king during these days. The temporary king would be either a criminal condemned to death, or a terminally ill person. During the festivities, these men would be king and reign the country for a short

time. This reminds us a little bit of the Prince Carnaval today, who will have the keys (authority) of the town in his possession for the duration of Carnaval (three days).

The Christian church at first opposed these rituals, but they learned that the integration of these rituals into the Christian church would be a better way of dealing with heathen beliefs. In the year 1091, Ash Wednesday became the official beginning of a forty day long Lent. We find here also an explanation for the name Carnaval. During Lent people would do penance for their sins by fasting, and the Latin "Carne Vale" means goodbye to the flesh or meat.

At the end of the 17th century, the Reformation started to preach soberness and were therefore totally against these exorbitant celebrations. Because of this the Catholic church had to change their opinion and by the beginning of the 18th century, Carnaval had ceased to exist.

Carnaval as it is celebrated today in the Provinces of Noord-Brabant and Limburg, originates from the German Rhineland, with its cradle in Cologne. This city, occupied by Napoleon's Army from 1794 until 1815, and annexed in 1815 by Prussia, had many inhabitants who could not forget Cologne's glorious past. In the past, the emperor had visited Cologne more than once and everytime was

welcomed with great pomp and circumstance. With this in mind, the very first Carnaval (or Fashing as it is named in Germany) parade was organized in 1823. The parade had to be equal to the wealthy and glorious entries of the Habsburg emperors in the old days. Prince Carnaval still wears a Renaissance costume, referring to the emperors, and is accompanied by soldiers in 17th century uniforms. However, at the time of the first parade these uniforms were really meant as a spoof on the Prussians. Characters from the Comedia dell'arte from Venice, like the jester, domino and clown were also an inspiration. And to preserve this all for the descendants, the first Carnaval newspaper was published in 1825.

Little by little all kinds of elements were added. Carnaval associations were established and medals were presented to special citizens and participants of Carnaval, which was actually again a persiflage on the Prussians' rain of medals and military behavior. In 1827 the decision was made that members had to wear a hat in order to distinguish themselves from non-members. And it didn't take long before "Tanzmariechen" (majorette) was added as a spoof on the camp followers.

From Cologne, Carnaval spread all over the Rhineland and the Dutch provinces of Noord-Brabant and Limburg. However, the reason why the Carnaval associations were established differ widely. For example, in 1839 a group of shopkeepers in Maastricht established the "Societeit Momus." They decided to make Carnaval an unforgettable fest, because a well organized popular fest would benefit the city's economy. Care for the poor was also one of their objects and so they also organized other festivities which had nothing to do with Carnaval.

Nowadays, almost every village has at least one carnaval association that organizes the festivities for the city, village or district. It consists of a "Raad van Elf" (Council of Eleven) which is presided by the president or lord, and they are responsible for the activities during the carnaval season. They choose a new prince every year, publish the carnaval newspaper and organize and escort the parade. The Council of Eleven also visits senior homes, schools and other associations and they give out medals to persons who have made themselves useful during Carnaval.

Many clubs, associations and schools have their own prince and carnaval fest and the 254th Base Support Battalion in Schinnen, The Netherlands, is no exception. Every year the 254th BSB has a Carnaval Fest which is visited by local authorities and carnaval associations. By tradition these fests are reigned over by a prince and princess. Last year the prince was Dutch and the princess American, which means that this year the prince will be American and the princess Dutch. The Fest was Feb. 23, at the Cafe Nova in Schinnen and started with the proclamation of the prince and princess of Carnaval for 2000.



Dan Myers

PHOTO: Sandy Aubrey

Sing for breakfast

By Sandy Aubrey

BRUNSSUM, Netherlands – About 100 military and civilian members of the Tri-border attended a National Prayer Breakfast Feb. 19 at the International Inn.

The program included a musical presentation by Dan Myers, scripture readings, and guest speaker, Col. Ronald Strong, Installation Management Agency-Europe chaplain.

The message put out by Myers and Strong emphasized the importance of prayer. As a prelude to one of his songs, Myers set the tone of the meeting and shared a quote with the audience, one that he claimed to hate and love at the same time: "In a world screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering." He wrote the song "Stutterin'" from the perspective of an outsider questioning Christians about their faith.

Strong picked up the theme and began his presentation by describing prayer as the key connection between humans and God. He used anecdotes and scriptures to convey his firm belief that the strength and effectiveness of prayer comes from persistence, patience and perseverance. He said he believed that spiritual degradation was the result of the removal of God from a person's life.

"Col. Strong was an outstanding speaker," said Sgt. Regina Robinson, HHD supply sergeant. "I felt he had an uplifting message for me and it was to continue praying regardless of how the situation may seem because God hasn't forgotten and will answer my prayers in His time."

The tradition of holding National Prayer Breakfasts started in 1953 under the administration of President Dwight Eisenhower. The purpose of the event was and is two-fold: it recognizes the role of religion in the lives of leaders and it brings the community together to pray for our country.

Lunch packs power

By Sandy Aubrey

SCHINNEN, Netherlands – How good it is to be able to replenish the body and soul in an hour.

At the 254th Base Support Bn. the replenishing comes in the form of Power Luncheons that are held every first Monday of the month. Webster defines power as the ability act or produce an effect. And that is just what the luncheons do – they produce the effect of gratification and inspiration.

The food they say is always delicious and the guest speakers use scripture, humor and sometimes music to inspire and motivate.

About 40 members of the Tri-border community gathered Feb. 2 to hear Col. Bob Cox, commander of Combat Equipment Group - Europe, speak about having a spirit of power, love and discipline. He said God didn't need fans, that God wanted players who were not timid but powerful, and who showed love and had discipline.

Cox urged the group to read the Bible daily and told them that it was important to do so because the word 'bible' stood for basic information before leaving earth.

"The guest speaker was wonderful," said Jan Maessen, 254th BSB manpower officer. "I very happy to see these luncheons starting up again because I think they're a great benefit to the community, both Dutch and U.S."

The luncheons are open to the public and are free of charge.

Brussels Community Calendar

Brussels American School international dinner and show is March 6, 6-9:30 p.m., in BAS Multi-Purpose Room, sponsored by the BAS PTSO. Info: 0479 980 355.

ACS (02/717-9783) Metro Madness class is March 13, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; free computer classes at the Computer Lab: MS Word March 8, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and MS PowerPoint, 1:30-5:30 p.m., MS Access March 9, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and MS Excel, 1:30-5:30 p.m.; Army Family Action Plan Forum March 9-10, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Active Parenting of Teens Workshop March 9-11, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the Chapel area; "Conflict-Reflections and Resolution" workshop March 23, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the NSA Chapel area; Toddler playgroup meets every Tuesday, 10 a.m.-noon, in the CYS multi-purpose room. The ACS lending closet now has microwave ovens to loan to in- or out-bound personnel.

Outdoor Recreation (02/717-9775 or 0474 683 544) travels to Ghent and Brugge March 6, 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m.; Antwerp Rubens house and diamond museum March 13, 8 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Delft factory tour and Keukenhof March 27, from 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Price is \$40 adults, \$33 children.

Three Star Lounge (02/717-9822 or

9819) Movie Night with free popcorn every Thursday, 7:30 p.m.: Mar 4, "Stuck on You;" March 11, "Master and Commander;" March 18, "Scary Movie 3." Karaoke night March 12. St. Patrick's Day party March 19, 5 p.m., \$5 per person.

NSA Chapel (02/717-9708) Christian Protestant worship service with the celebration of Communion is every Sunday, 9-9:30 a.m.; Sunday school for all ages follows the service.

Multi-Craft Center (02/717-9629) NSA Auto Craft Shop offers: "Automotive Classes for Dummies," every Thursday, 7-9 p.m., by appointment only, cost is \$25, will teach general vehicle maintenance and dynamics; a six-week motorcycle class tailored specifically to your needs is \$45, meets every Wednesday, 7-9 p.m., by appointment only. NSA Multi-Craft Center offers: cross-stitching classes Wednesday afternoons, Saturday mornings or afternoons and Sunday afternoons; basic knitting classes, Fridays, 10 a.m.; and jewelry making classes, Wednesdays, 6 p.m. Call the Multi Craft Center for more info or to sign up.

For more information about events happening in the Brussels community, visit www.brussels.army.mil.

254th BSB Local Calendar

Local club aids orphans - The *American Spouses Club* collects clothes, toys, linens, dishes, reading books, text books, school supplies, vitamins, Tylenol and pen lights for the International Orphan Care in Kabul. Drop off donations at U.S. Thrift Shop at Schinnen or U.K. Thrift Shop at AFNorth; *Food International Orphan Care* is open to all students at AFNorth and Geilenkirchen. Info: 046 443-7436.

Future leaders hold conference - Future Business Leaders of America hosts its annual State Leadership Conference March 24-26. Organizers need judges for events on March 25. Info: Bertha Manning, DSN 480-6951 or civilian 06371 47-6951 or Email Bertha_manning@eu.odedodea.edu

Parenting Fair nears - The Tri-border community professionals'

Parenting Fair, Behavior and Discipline Workshop is March 5, 10 a.m. at AFNorth School library.

Scholarships available - The Andrews Federal Credit Union is offering a total of five, \$1,500 scholarships for members who qualify. Stop by the Schinnen AFCU to learn details or visit www.andrewsfcu.org/scholarship.htm.

Tax relief available - German VAT forms at Geilenkirchen are available for all NATO ID cardholders.

Moms to-be visit - Labor and delivery tour at Heerlen Hospital, March 8, 12:30-4 p.m. Meet at the ACS Building 39 at Schinnen.

PWOC plans Easter activities - AFNorth Protestant Women of the Chapel meet March 8, 6 p.m., in the chapel American Room. Info: Inga Swope, 45 545-3374.

Jobs available at Schinnen - The

in the commercial area on Chièvres Air Base. Info: Daniel Libre, DSN 361-5683.

Prime Time Lounge - Country night March 13; A St. Patrick's Day party is March 17, starting at 5 p.m.; Karaoke is March 18, 8 p.m. Building 7, Daumerie Caserne. Info: DSN 361-5540 or civilian 06827-5540.

Chièvres Library, Community Activity Center, Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. bring the kids for a fun filled time of story time and crafting. The library is now open Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Info: DSN 361-5767.

Ski with BOSS - on a trip to Garmisch, Germany, March 5-8. Single Soldiers \$285, others \$290, double occupancy only. Price includes transportation and accommodation. Info: DSN 423-3834 or DSN 366-6272.

Get out the vote - Voting Assistance Guide is available on the Internet: <http://www.fvap.gov/>

Hoop champs decided

By Harry Geesaman

The 80th ASG unit level basketball championships were played Feb. 21 at SHAPE main gymnasium. The double elimination tournament was endured by three teams this year; Regional Signal Group SHAPE (RSGS), HHC 80th ASG, and NATO Support Agency (NSA) Brussels. The four-game tournament was filled with exciting slam dunks, steals, three-point shots, under the board scoring, and tap-in shots.

The opening game started at 10 a.m. with NSA and HHC 80th ASG teams meeting on the hard court. NSA won the 30-minute contest 65-51. NSA's Alfred Poullard poured in 18 points for the winners and HHC 80th ASG's own, Keith Bankley, nailed 16 points, including four three-pointers, for the losing cause.

In game two, NSA came back on the court to face the 2003 unit level champions, SHAPE's top team, RSGS. RSGS had four shooters scoring double digits. Doyle Anthony had 16, Torrie Horton scored 12, and Joseph Campbell and Michael Roth each had 11 to contribute to the 62-52 win over NSA. NSA's Alfred Poullard contributed 17 points for the losing battle.

In game three, HHC 80th ASG team had fresh legs when they went up against the tiring NSA team. However, at the end of the contest, NSA led, 58-49. Crawford Burns scored 21 points for NSA and HHC 80th ASG's top gun was John Butler with 16 points. HHC 80th ASG was eliminated from the tournament after their two losses.

In the final game, the rested RSGS team played NSA after their fourth straight game and won 58-47. The physically-challenged NSA team played hard, but the hot RSGS shooting by Anthony Doyle and Michael Roth, both with 14 points, and Torrie Horton with 11, kept the defending champs

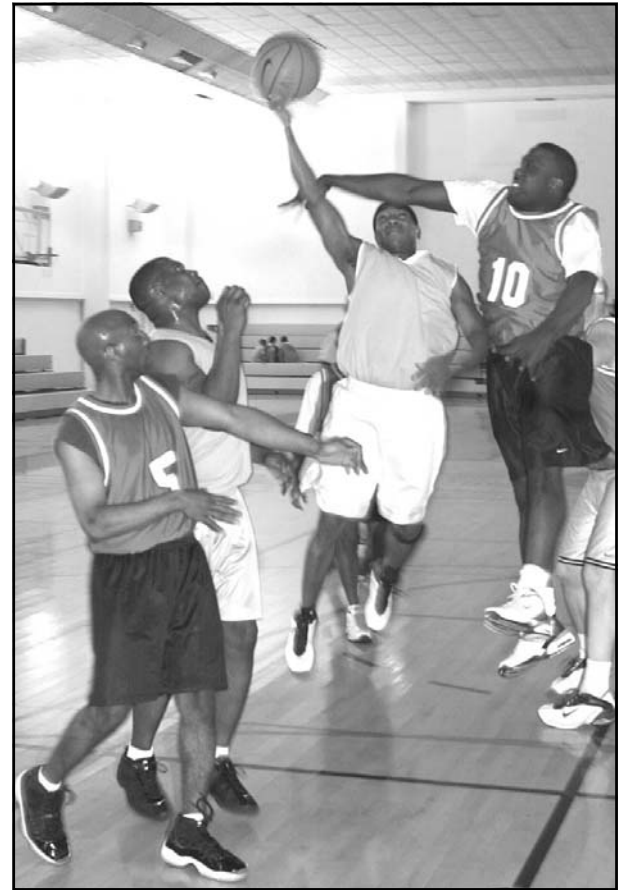


PHOTO: Rick Haverinen

NATO Support Activity number 10, Sean Gillespie, blocks a shot by HHC 80th ASG's Keith Bankley during the third game of the 80th ASG's unit level basketball championship Feb. 21. At left are NSA's Crawford Burns, wearing number five, and HHC 80th ASG's Curtis Johnson.

in the lead from the tip-off. Crawford Burns had 22 points for NSA in the final.

RSGS and NSA teams advance to represent the 80th ASG in the 2004 Army-Europe Unit Level Basketball Championships in Heidelberg March 4-7.

Geesaman is 80th ASG's community recreation officer.

Directorate of Community Activities has a permanent, full-time job opening for a recreation assistant GS-0189-5. Info: Benelux CPAC, 32 6827-5467 or visit Benelux.cpac@cpoecur.army.mil;

There is a job vacancy in the delicatessen section at the Schinnen Commissary for American applicants. Stop by the commissary.

Cub Scout Pack 100 has a Pinewood Derby March 27, 10 a.m., at Schinnen Sports Center.

Volunteer Advisory Council meets March 16, 10 a.m., at ACS. Info: Teri Ryan, 046 443-7451.

ASEP class offered - Personal Financial Management for NCOs I is March 8-12, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Info: Treebeek Education Center, DSN 364-6060.

The 254th BSB seeks volunteers for Army Family Action Plan Conference, March 11-12. Info: Teri Ryan, 046-443-7451.

Bowling center - Cosmic bowling Fridays, 6 p.m.; No-Tap Tournaments Saturdays, 6 p.m., men 9 pins, women 8 pins, \$15 entry fee. **Schinnen Playgroup for Toddlers** meets every Thursday, 9:30-11:30 a.m., at Schinnen Sports Center.

Free developmental screening service for babies through three years of age. All American-sponsored families are eligible. Info: Mary Jo Rooney, 045 563-6126.

Live entertainment performed -

Enjoy Hank Slaughter every Friday, 5:30 p.m., Club 13 at AFNorth.

Adult classes set - Unless otherwise indicated, classes are held in ACS Building 39 at Schinnen, 046 443-7500: New Parent Education infant massage classes March 16, 10-11 a.m.; Professional development training for volunteers in child abuse awareness March 17, 10 a.m.-noon; Employment Readiness Program has workshops every Tuesday, "Finding Employment," 10 a.m.-noon, and "Hands on Resumix," 2-4 p.m.

Get away to Poland for shopping - SATO Travel has an express trip to Poland March 12-14. Price is euro 115. Info: 360-7450.

SHAPE and Chièvres Community Calendar

SHAPE American Elementary School Advisory Committee meets March 4, 4 p.m., in the school library. All parents are welcome. Info: Patty Geiger, 065 62-2548.

MWR holds a flea market March 6, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Community Activity Center on Chièvres Air Base. Info: chievresactivitycenter@benelux.army.mil

Entertainment Centre update - Building 207, SHAPE, office open Monday-Friday, 2-5:30 p.m.: The Glass Menagerie performances are March 4-6, 7:30 p.m., and March 7, 3 p.m.; Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, March 19, 24, 26, 27, 7:30 p.m.; March 20, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; March 21 & 28, 3 p.m. Tickets go on sale March 10. The Women by Clare Booth Luce auditions April 22-23. Reservations or info: DSN 423-4257/3312.

Blood drive - The Belgian Red Cross has a blood drive March 22, 9-11 a.m., at Hangar 4

in the commercial area on Chièvres Air Base. Info: Daniel Libre, DSN 361-5683.

Prime Time Lounge - Country night March 13; A St. Patrick's Day party is March 17, starting at 5 p.m.; Karaoke is March 18, 8 p.m. Building 7, Daumerie Caserne. Info: DSN 361-5540 or civilian 06827-5540.

Chièvres Library, Community Activity Center, Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. bring the kids for a fun filled time of story time and crafting. The library is now open Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Info: DSN 361-5767.

Ski with BOSS - on a trip to Garmisch, Germany, March 5-8. Single Soldiers \$285, others \$290, double occupancy only. Price includes transportation and accommodation. Info: DSN 423-3834 or DSN 366-6272.

Get out the vote - Voting Assistance Guide is available on the Internet: <http://www.fvap.gov/>

Army Community Service - Building 318, SHAPE. *Relocation assistance*, sign up or info: Veronique Hensgens, 065 44-4332 or DSN 423-4332: Sponsorship training, learn all the basics, March 3, 10 a.m.; Make the Right Move, March 3, 2 p.m., make this your best PCS move ever; 80th ASG Newcomer's Brief, March 11, 8:30 a.m., at the WEB office in Hotel Maisieres; Take the Bus, March 11, 1:30 p.m., meet at Hotel Maisieres for an introduction to the Belgium bus system, sign up at ACS, in Building 318 and head out to Mons; Cultural Adaption Trip, March 13, go with ACS to a shopping warehouse, bus leaves ACS at 9 a.m., returns at 5 p.m.; Take the Train, March 26, learn how to utilize the train system, children are welcome, cost is euro 18.50 for adults, euro 9 for children 6-12, under 6 free, leaves from Building 318, 8:30 a.m., sign up early at ACS. *Financial*

Readiness Classes are held at ACS and begin at 10 a.m., info, DSN 423-4824: Personal Financial Readiness, March 2; Credit: Too Much of a Good Thing?, March 11; Your Checkbook: More Month than Money?, March 12; Your Spending Plan, March 9; Insurance: Which Plan for you?, March 10; Savings and Investments, Where to Stash My Cash?, March 16; Debt Reduction the Easy Way, March 17; Consumer Issues, March 18; Last day for ACS Coupon Challenge, March 31; Balanced Diet on a Balanced Budget, March 25, Community Activity Center on Chièvres Air Base, a commissary tour immediately follows the class, bus departs ACS at 9:30 a.m., March is National Nutrition Month; Investing for Your Future, March 23, 7 p.m., Celebrate National Women's History Month in March.

OUI causes death in USAREUR

19 February 2004

Bell Sends #13-04
SAFETY ALERT
Alcohol-Related Vehicle Fatalities

1. Tragedy can strike at any time. Two weeks ago, a USAREUR Soldier who had just returned home after spending a year in Iraq was killed in a single-car accident while off duty. The investigation determined that the driver of the car, in which the Soldier was a passenger, failed to negotiate a curve. The car crashed through a guardrail, rolled down a hill, and came to rest on its roof, crushing the Soldier's skull. The driver had been drinking.

2. This accident underscores the risks this command faces as large numbers of USAREUR Soldiers redeploy from Iraq to the central region after long deployments. The two greatest concerns are Soldiers driving on European roads and driving while intoxicated.

3. Returning Soldiers may no longer be familiar with driving in Europe. Others may have deployed to Iraq shortly after arriving in theater, without having much opportunity to drive or to get a USAREUR drivers license. The risk of these Soldiers being involved in an accident is high and increases dramatically when they choose to drive after having a drink or two. Leaders must be actively involved in preventing vehicular accidents.

4. Leader involvement alone, however, is not enough. All Soldiers, civilians, and family members can and must be involved in accident prevention. A new program initiated by Combined Joint Task Force



Gen. B. B. Bell

7 provides an opportunity for such involvement. This program, called Operation Guardian Angel, encourages families and friends to adopt a returning Soldier and serve as the Soldier's "safety net." Through this program, "guardian angels" provide for safety oversight and help ensure Soldiers safely return to duty following block leave or rest and recuperation (R&R). Everyone is strongly encouraged to participate in this program or start one similar to it; it can save lives.

5. Reintegration is both difficult and challenging. Our main challenge during this time is to ensure the well-being and safety of our Soldiers. The USAREUR Reintegration Model and Bell Sends Message #10-04 outline the command strategy for safely reintegrating returning Soldiers. Leaders, especially rear detachment commanders, can help keep Soldiers safe by concentrating on the execution of tasks outlined in the USAREUR Reintegration Model.

6. As we thank our returning Soldiers for their contributions and individual sacrifices, we must remind them to practice safety at home. Ensure they are aware of the risks involved when driving on European roads and particularly the dangers of driving while intoxicated. Do not let a tragedy happen on your watch. We must do everything we possibly can to prevent another death as we execute Any Mission, Anywhere.

B. B. BELL
General, USA
Commanding

Fines for traffic offenses increase in Belgium

By Marianne Schoonjans

Belgian authorities have increased penalties for vehicle operation offenses effective March 1. The offenses are organized into four categories.

"Ordinary Offenses" are punishable by a fine of euro 50-1,375. These include offense such as driving from 1-10 kilometer per hour (kph) over the speed limit, using a cell phone while driving, driving in a restricted area such as the bus lane, and not wearing a seat belt.

"First Degree Offenses" are punishable by a fine of euro 150-1,375 and a possible loss of driving license. These include offenses

such as driving 11-20 kph over the speed limit, failure to maintain a safe distance between vehicles, and illegal parking on a sidewalk.

"Second Degree Offenses" are punishable by a fine of euro 175-2,750 and a possible loss of driving license. These include offenses such as driving 21-40 kph over the speed limit, failure to yield priority to vehicles on the right, crossing a white line and running red or yellow traffic lights.

"Third degree Offenses" are punishable by a fine of euro 300-2,750 and mandatory loss of driving license. This results in a suspension of driving privileges from

8 days to 5 years. These include offenses such as driving 40 or more kph over the speed limit or making an improper U-turn.

The procedure for paying fines has also changed, making it difficult to avoid paying on the spot.

The policeman will request immediate payment. Paying on the spot constitutes an admission of guilt. The offender can either pay cash or using a debit/credit card. Residents of Belgium have the option of paying by fiscal stamps (available at the post office) within five days.

If the driver refuses to immediately pay the fine, he will have to pay a deposit, and the case will be decided later by a traffic court judge. The deposit consists of the amount of the proposed fine plus euro 110 for non-residents of Belgium. If the driver refuses to pay a deposit, the vehicle will be impounded until the case is resolved.

The maximum fine that can be paid on the spot is euro 750 for non-residents and euro 250 for residents. If the fine exceeds that amount, the offender will not have to pay on the spot but through the regular judiciary procedure. Payment can be made in

euros, dollars, or British pounds. Residents of Belgium include those who are currently registered in a Belgian commune. This includes U.S. civilian employees, civilian dependents, and military dependents who are stationed in Belgium. Military personnel are currently not considered residents for purposes of this law, since they do not register in Belgian communes. However, the Northern Law Center is coordinating with Belgian authorities to obtain an exemption for military personnel.

Schoonjans is Belgian legal advisor at Northern Law Center.

Army deploys lighter, faster version of AKO info service

Army News Service -- Army Knowledge Online now offers a version that loads up to 10 times faster than the regular service.

AKO Lite was developed in response to concerns of deployed Soldiers in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom that AKO took too long to access and use, said Lt. Col. Kenneth Blakely, chief of AKO.

"The normal

AKO is heavy with lots of bytes to download," Blakely said. "Soldiers said they want something faster, so we made AKO Lite."

The AKO Lite homepage is about a third of the size of the regular version.

Other initiatives that will be implemented in the near future include: a server software upgrade that will deliver both AKO and AKO Lite twice as fast as it does currently; making the viewable area of the announcements section smaller; updating all AKO pages

with consistent colors and logos; and creating a new portal that allows AKO users to create their own homepages that can be viewed by other AKO users.

Not all AKO changes have been applauded by the field. Speaking about the early January Army announcement that limited where AKO Web-based e-mail could automatically be forwarded to, Blakely said it was to make AKO compliant with Army Regulation 25-2, Information Assurance,

which was published in November.

"AR 25-2 specifically prohibits automatic e-mail forwarding to unofficial e-mail addresses," Blakely said. "You can still forward any AKO e-mail manually to an unofficial e-mail address if you want to after reading it."

AKO Lite can be accessed through the regular AKO sign-in page, www.us.army.mil, from a link on the left side of the page. It works with the same user name and password as the regular AKO service.



Benelux Meteor Deadline and Publication Dates

Copy due (noon)	Print Date	Copy due (noon)	Print Date	Copy due (noon)	Print Date	Copy due (noon)	Print Date
Mar 8	Mar 18	Apr 12	Apr 22	May 10	May 20	Jun 7	Jun 17
Mar 29	Apr 8	Apr 26	May 6	May 24	Jun 3	Jun 28	July 8

About Us



The *Benelux Meteor* is the authorized unofficial Army newspaper published under AR 360-1 for 80th Area Support Group personnel. Editorial content is provided by the 80th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office and the 254th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office. Opinions expressed are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 80th Area Support Group. The *Meteor* is published twice per month. Circulation is 3,000. Our mailing address is Benelux Meteor, HQ 80th ASG, Unit 21419, Public Affairs Office, APO AE 09708. Telephone: DSN 361-5419; fax: DSN 361-5106; civilian telephone prefix: 068-27-5419. The country code for Belgium is 0032. Email address: meteor@benelux.army.mil

Policy

- We invite and encourage letters to the editor, but they must be signed. We will consider withholding the name of the author upon request, but we will not print any anonymous letters.
- We reserve the right to edit letters to make them fit the allotted space, to remove libelous material and to correct grammar. Letters should contribute to the informational interest of the issue in question.
- Articles and photographs may be submitted for consideration but publication depends upon the judgment of the editor.
- Community-related event announcements must use civilian dates and times. Spell out acronyms initially and include a point of contact, telephone number and e-mail address.
- All submissions are subject to editing.

Advertising

- Messages from readers from profit and non-profit organizations which involve money exchange constitutes advertising.
- Neither the *Benelux Meteor* staff nor other public affairs personnel can accept advertising requests.
- The appearance of advertising, including inserts, does not constitute endorsement of the products or services offered. Everything advertised must be available for purchase, use or patronage, without discrimination.

- Any gambling or lottery requiring payment for chance cannot be advertised as stated in 18 U.S.C. 1302.

Deadline
Copy and photographs are due by noon 10 calendar days before publication date.

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Labor of love returns classic jet fighter to place of prominence

Volunteers from the Belgian Air Force returned their Meteor F 8 jet airplane to its home on Daumerie Caserne Feb. 24 following a 16-month restoration project.

The crew had cleaned the entire plane, replaced some metalwork and given the jet a fresh coat of paint. Because the plane is mounted on a pedestal near the front of the caserne, weathering damages the appearance after time. This was at least the third occasion the aircraft has been refurbished for display.

This particular airplane once had a working life, most recently in the 1950s as a demonstration craft for Diables Rouges, or Red Devils, the Belgian Air Force precision aerial acrobatic team. Prior to that, it was part of the stock inventory of Meteor fighter aircraft flown on sorties by Belgian Air Force pilots. The 7th Aviation Wing of the Belgian Air Force routinely flew Meteors out of Chièvres Air Base during the 1950's and 1960's at the height of the Cold War.

Students of aircraft design can identify this particular plane as an early example of the F 8 model because the overhead canopy section to the rear of the pilot is metal instead of Plexiglas. The F 8 design appeared in 1949 and by the early 1950s it was the British Royal Air Force's premier fighter aircraft. Belgium was the first foreign country to buy the Meteor from the British, and they were also sold to air forces in the Netherlands, Denmark, Australia, Egypt, Syria, Israel and Brazil. Egypt flew their Meteors against RAF pilots during the 1956 Suez conflict. Australia flew the Meteor during the Korean War.

Developed by the British Gloster Aircraft Company, an earlier version of the Meteor has the distinction of being the only Allied jet aircraft to fly during World War II. The earliest version flew in March 1943. The Meteor had enough speed at low altitudes to destroy Nazi V-1 flying bombs. Various versions of the Meteor established air speed records over the lifetime of the design.



PHOTOS: Vanessa Thonnard TSC Caserne Daumerie
Premier Cpl. Chef Jean-Marie Huygens drills holes Feb. 23 to replace sheet metal parts covering replica canon on the Meteor F 8.



Cpl. Chef Rosolino Ricotta, left, and Premier Master Sgt. Davy Morren prepare to reattach one of the Meteor's wings Feb. 24.

Belgian game like pumped-up croquet



PHOTOS: F. Neil Neeley

It's a game not quite older than the hills but it's ancient. Crossage is primarily played in France and Belgium, but because it dates from the Middle Ages, it has traveled wherever the French have gone.

windows are protected from the projectiles. Teams compete to see which side can first strike a goal outside a bar or café. The losers must pay for a drink for the winners at each goal location, so the proprietors are as cheerful as the players.

The games of golf and croquet are derived from crossage.

Crossage is played with wooden mallets and balls, although one variation replaces the mallet's wooden head with metal. The ball, called a cholette, is not round, but egg-shaped. The mallet is a crosse. The rules allow the cholette to be changed during play, and experts will have cholettes made from various type of wood which will be used depending on the nature of the shot.

One variation of the game is played in fields, but in Chièvres, Belgium, as shown here on Feb. 25, it's a downtown activity.

Traditionally played every Ash Wednesday as Lent begins, the downtown streets are cleared of automobiles and

Crossage

